# **ORIGINAL**

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BEFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATEON

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**COMMISSIONERS** JEFF HATCH-MILLER, CHAIRMAN WILLIAM A. MUNDELL

MARK SPITZER MIKE GLEASON KRISTIN K. MAYES 2005 OCT 12 1P 3: 39

AZ CORP COMMISSION DOCUMENT CONTROL

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IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF WATER UTILITY OF GREATER TONOPAH, INC., FOR AN EXTENSION OF ITS CERTIFICATE OF CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY

DOCKET NO. W-02450A-05-0430

WATER UTILITY OF GREATER TONOPAH'S OPPOSITION TO SIERRA NEGRA RANCH, LLC'S APPLICATION TO INTERVENE

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I. The Application is Untimely

Under the Procedural Order entered in this matter on July 18, 2005, all applications to intervene were to be filed no later than August 24, 2005. The reason for an intervention cutoff is to ensure that parties (and their purported interests in a proceeding) are identified sufficiently in advance to allow adequate participation and avoid the surprise and delay that often accompanies last minute interventions. Sierra Negra's Application to

Water Utility of Greater Tonopah ("WUGT"), by and through its undersigned

legal counsel, hereby respectfully opposes the untimely and insufficient Application to

Intervene filed in the above-entitled matter on October 3, 2005 by Sierra Negra Ranch, LLC

("Sierra Negra"), as well as its Request to Supplement the Record filed October 5, 2005. For

the reasons set forth herein, the Application to Intervene and Request to Supplement must be

Intervene not only missed the date for intervention, it was also filed 21 days <u>after</u> the evidentiary hearing was conducted. Sierra Negra's Application does not justify its failure to file for intervention in a timely manner. Its implication that it did not know of the proceeding is legally irrelevant and factually incorrect.

# A. Receipt of Notice is not Required by Law

In Arizona, "there is no requirement that notice of the application hearing be given to all landowners or potential water customers residing within the area covered by an original application for a certificate of convenience and necessity to operate a domestic water utility." Walker v. De Concini, 86 Ariz. 143, 148, 341 P.2d 933, 936 (1959); Arizona Corporation Commission v. Tucson Insurance and Bonding Agency, 3 Ariz. App. 458, 415 P. 472 (1966) ("Tucson Insurance"). In both cases the court rejects a landowner's claim that a certificate of convenience and necessity was invalid because the landowner did not receive notice of the original application. Thus, landowners are not indispensable parties to a CC&N proceeding. They are allowed to intervene only at the discretion of the Commission. A failure to comply with the time frames established by Commission rule, or as in this matter, by procedural order, must be supported by good cause. Sierra Negra's Application and Supplement makes no good cause showing at all.

WUGT informed Sierra Negra, not once, but on four separate occasions, that it was correcting the Commission's records so WUGT, rather than West Phoenix Water Company was reflected as the certificate holder. Sierra Negra never informed WUGT that it held legal title to any property encompassed by the Application; nor did Sierra Negra indicate to WUGT that it had any concerns with WUGT's Application. Sierra Negra has not

justified its late effort to interject itself in this proceeding after the close of the hearing.

# B. <u>Sierra Negra Received Actual Notice that</u> this Matter was Pending before the ACC

Sierra Negra admits that WUGT informed representatives of Sierra Negra of WUGT's intent to pursue the pending matter, but implies that it was not informed that an application was actually pending with the Commission. The implication is false. Sierra Negra was informed of WUGT's Application both before and after it was filed with the Commission.

When Sierra Negra's representative, Bryan P. O'Reilly, first met with John Mihlik, Sr. on June 7, 2005, he was informed of WUGT's intent to file this Application. The Application was then filed three (3) days later on June 10, 2005. In contrast, Mr. O'Reilly never informed WUGT that it had acquired title to property. As a result, Mr. Mihlik understood Sierra Negra was merely undertaking due diligence research regarding a potential purchase or development. *See*, Affidavit of J. John Mihlik, Sr. attached hereto as Exhibit A.

In a phone conversation conducted August 1, 2005, John Mihlik, Jr. informed Mr. O'Reilly that the Application was pending and that Staff had asked some questions concerning potential development in the area. Mr. O'Reilly specifically requested that WUGT keep Sierra Negra's involvement and development concepts confidential. *See*, Affidavit of J. John Mihlik, Jr. attached hereto as Exhibit B.

In yet another meeting conducted with Mr. O'Reilly on August 9, 2005, Mr. Mihlik, Sr. again briefly discussed the fact that the Application was pending before the Arizona Corporation Commission. See, Affidavit of J. John Mihlik, Sr. attached hereto as

Exhibit A.

Thus, Negra Sierra was directly informed on three occasions prior to the intervention cutoff date about this Application and WUGT's intent to correct the Commission's records so WUGT, rather than West Phoenix Water Company, Inc., is reflected as the holder of the certificate of convenience and necessity.

# C. Sierra Negra also Received Notice through Publication

In addition to receiving actual notice, Sierra Negra received notice through publication. WUGT caused notice of the Intervention cutoff date and hearing date to be published in the West Valley View Newspaper on August 12, 2005. A copy of the Affidavit of publication is attached as Exhibit C.

# D. <u>Sierra Negra was not the Landowner reflected on</u> the Assessor's Website as of August 5, 2005

WUGT also mailed notice directly to the nine entities reflected on the Maricopa County Assessor's Website as landowners. WUGT conducted the search on the day it mailed the notice (August 5, 2005). As reflected on Exhibit D attached hereto, Sierra Negra was not listed.

As Sierra Negra had never indicated to WUGT that it was the legal title holder of the property, WUGT had no reason to question the landowner list obtained from the Assessor's website. Notice was mailed to the nine entities listed, including Phoenix I-10, LLC (the entity from whom Sierra Negra purchased the Property). See, Affidavit of John

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> It is common practice for a real estate purchase agreement to require the seller to inform the buyer immediately if legal notices are received regarding the property. If Sierra Negra's purchase agreement failed to include such a provision or if the Seller failed to comply therewith, such issues are between the Buyer and the Seller and do not justify untimely intervention in this proceeding.

Mihlik, Jr. attached hereto as Exhibit B.

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In summary, WUGT provided oral notice of its intent to file the Application. It then, on two separate occasions informed Sierra Negra that the application was pending before the Commission. WUGT, in accordance with the Procedural Order, published notice of the proceeding in a paper of general circulation and mailed notice to the landowners reflected on the County Assessor's website as of August 5, 2005. Sierra Negra provides no justification for failing to timely file an Application to Intervene.

# II. There is no Direct and Substantial Affect on the Applicant

Generally the owner of land sought to be included within a certificate of convenience and necessity would be directly and substantially affected by an extension proceeding. However, this is not the usual case.

WUGT seeks only to amend a decision of the Commission so it properly reflects the action taken twenty (20) years ago. The record clearly reflects that Section 31, T2N, R6W was initially included within the Certificate of Convenience and Necessity of the Tonopah Water Company by Decision No. 33424, dated October 6, 1961. Tonopah Water Company transferred *all* of its CC&N to West Phoenix Water Company by Decision No. 39759, dated December 5, 1968. All of West Phoenix Water Company's CC&N was subsequently transferred by Decision Nos. 54418 and 54419, dated April 1, 1985, in part to the Northwest Buckeye Water Company (now the Water Utility of Greater Buckeye, Inc.) and, in part, to the West Buckeye Water Company (now the Water Utility of Greater Tonopah, Inc.). The legal description, however, omitted a section and a half of land certificated to West Phoenix Water Company. Sierra Negra has no direct or substantial

interest in the correction of a Decision entered prior to its acquisition of 20 years ago.

# III. The Applicant Seeks to Unduly Broaden the Issues

In its supplement, Sierra Negra lists three reasons for granting it intervention:
a) general opposition to inclusion; b) a general questioning of WUGT's ability to provide
adequate service; and c) a stated preference for a provider that can provide integrated water
and sewer service. <sup>2</sup> These areas are not in dispute or are irrelevant and therefore to permit
any further testimony thereon constitutes an undue broadening of the issues.

# A. Opposition to Inclusion

The issue of whether the lands are to be certificated or whether the certificate is to be transferred to WUGT were determined in 1961 and 1985 respectively. Sierra Negra has no standing today to object to the amendment necessary to correctly reflect a Commission action taken twenty years ago when Sierra Negra likely did not even exist. The sole issue presented by this docket is the best method of procedurally correcting a clerical omission made in 1985.

The Arizona Supreme Court in James P. Paul Water Co. v. Arizona Corp. Com'n, 137 Ariz. 426, 429, 671 P.2d 404, 407 (1983) explained:

"Once granted, the certificate confers upon its holder an exclusive right to provide the relevant service for as long as the grantee can provide adequate service at a reasonable rate. If a certificate of convenience and necessity within our system of regulated monopoly means anything, it means that its holder has the right to an opportunity to adequately provide the service it was certified to provide. Only upon a showing that a certificate holder, presented with a demand for service which is reasonable in light of projected need, has failed to supply such service at a reasonable cost to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The third item is also re-phrased as a fourth concern in Sierra Negra's pleading.

customers, can the Commission alter its certificate. Only then would it be in the public interest to do so."

# The court continued:

A system which did not provide certificate holders with an opportunity to provide adequate service at reasonable rates before deletion of a certificated area could be made would be antithetical to the public interest for several reasons. First, it would encourage price competition between public service corporations, the very mode of operation which the Legislature has rejected. Second, it encourages over-extensive development. In order to ensure that they will be able to supply service as the need arises, certificate holders will feel compelled to construct facilities before facilities are needed. The consuming public will ultimately pay for this needless construction which may, given the rate of technological development, prove to be obsolete by the time it is needed. Third, it fails to reward a public service corporation for taking on the risks and obligations concomitant to certification.

Id. 137 Ariz. at 429-30, 671 P.2d at 407-08.

WUGT is ready, willing and able to provide water service to its certificated area and has done so cost effectively for 20 years without customer or regulatory complaint.

# In Tucson International the Court of Appeals emphasized:

"Arbitrary deletion of areas of 160 acres or more, merely because a landowner objects to the inclusion of his land in a certificated area, obviously discriminates against the small landowner and has no basis in public convenience and necessity. A water company's ability, from an economical standpoint, to serve many small property owners may hinge upon the inclusion of a larger parcel of land in its certificate. If owners of a substantial amount of acreage may arbitrarily delete their holdings from a certificate, a property right without legal precedent is thereby granted them, which might be sold or otherwise exploited to the ultimate detriment of the using public.

3 Ariz App. at 463, 415 P.2d at 477.

# B. WUGT is able to provide Adequate Service

WUGT has been meeting the needs of customers located within WUGT's certificated area for 20 years. It has done so without complaint from customers or regulators. Its parent, West Maricopa Combine, owns five (5) public service corporations in Arizona and services over 3,000 customers. The Commission Staff and the Company testified that WUGT is a fit and proper entity to provide service to Section 31. Sierra Negra presents no factual basis to justify its concerns, let alone to warrant re-opening the record to take further evidence.<sup>3</sup>

# C. A Single Water and Sewer provider is not at issue.

This docket does not involve the provision of sewer service. Sierra Negra's preference for a single provider to provide both water and sewer service is irrelevant. There are no competing applicants vying for this service. To the contrary, this case involves only correcting the Commission's records to reflect the transfer of West Phoenix Water's CC&N to WUGT that occurred 20 years ago.

Furthermore, the issue of an integrated water and wastewater provider system is a red herring. There is no legal or operational requirement that water and sewer service be provided by a single entity. Water and wastewater systems do not require a single owner. If this were not the case, Title 48 would not allow separate domestic water improvement districts and sanitary districts to be formed. It is no more necessary for water and sewer

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Sierra Negra's original Application to Intervene made factual allegations premised on a Staff Report filed in another docket (W-02450A-04-0837). The information cited by the Applicant (and Staff) was outdated and failed to reflect the true condition of WUGT's public systems. In fact, Staff filed an Amended Report on September 30, 2005 in Docket No. W-02450A-04-0837 eliminating the factual premise for Sierra Negra's initial allegations.

service to be rendered by a single provider, than it is necessary for the same provider to render local, long distance and pay phone telephone service, or to render electrical service at the generation, transmission and distribution levels.

# **Conclusion**

Sierra Negra has filed an untimely application that seeks to unduly broaden the issues to be presented to the Commission without presenting "good cause" therefore. The Application to Intervene and Request to Supplement Record must be summarily denied.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS Delay of October, 2005.

CURTIS, GOODWIN, SULLIVAN, UDALL & SCHWAB, P.L.C.

William P. Sullivan, Esq. 2712 North Seventh Street

Phoenix, Arizona 85006-1090

Attorneys for Water Utility of Greater Tonopah, Inc.

## PROOF AND CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

1	PROOF AND CERTIFICATE OF MAILING
2	I hereby certify that on this day of October, 2005, I caused the foregoing
3	document to be served on the Arizona Corporation Commission by delivering the original and thirteen (13) copies of the above to:
4	
5	Docket Control Arizona Corporation Commission
6	1200 West Washington
7	Phoenix, Arizona 85007
8	With copies thereof hand-delivered/
9	mailed this day of October to:
10	Ernest Johnson, Director
11	Utilities Division Arizona Corporation Commission
12	1200 West Washington
13	Phoenix, Arizona 85007
14	Yvette B. Kinsey, ALJ
15	Hearing Division Arizona Corporation Commission
	1200 West Washington Phoenix, Arizona 85007
16	
17	Keith Layton Legal Division
18	Arizona Corporation Commission
19	1200 West Washington Phoenix, Arizona 85007
20	
21	Sheryl A. Sweeney Michele L. Lorenzen
22	Ryley Carlock & Applewhite
23	One North Central Avenue, Suite 1200 Phoenix, Arizona 85004-4417
24	Attorneys for Sierra Negra Ranch, LLC
25	
26	Marry Waller
27	1284/-5-3-2/ple-dings/Opposition to Intervention(3)



1	BEFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION			
2 3	COMMISSIONERS JEFF HATCH-MILLER, CHAIRMAN WILLIAM A. MUNDELL			
4	MARK SPITZER			
5	MIKE GLEASON KRISTIN K. MAYES			
6				
7	IN THE MATTER OF THE DOCKET NO. W-02450A-05-0430 APPLICATION OF WATER UTILITY OF			
9	GREATER TONOPAH, INC., FOR AN EXTENSION OF ITS CERTIFICATE OF CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY  AFFIDAVIT OF J. JOHN MIHLIK, SI			
0				
1	I, J. John Mihlik, Sr., upon first being duly sworn upon my oath do say:			
2	1. I am the President of Water Utility of Greater Tonopah.			
3	2. In my role as President of WUGT I meet with landowners and			
5	prospective developers who are interested in receiving water service			
6	from WUGT. Often these meetings occur with prospective purchasers			
7	who are undertaking due diligence reviews, many of whom never			
8	purchase the property or proceed with development.			
9	3. On or about June 7, 2005, I met with Bryan P. O'Reilly who represente			
20	5. On of about suite 1, 2005, I flict with Distant 1. O feeling who represent			
21	himself as being affiliated with Sierra Negra Ranch, LLC, a Nevada			
22	limited liability company.			
23	4. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the availability and general			
24	terms under which water and/or sewer service might be provided to a			
26	prospective development by WUGT.			
27	5. During the June 7, 2005 meeting with Mr. O'Reilly, I informed Mr.			
- 1	J. During the same 1, 2003 meeting with Mr. O Kerny, I intoffice Mr.			

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O'Reilly that WUGT intended to file with the Arizona Corporation

Commission an Application whereby the Commission's records would

be corrected to reflect WUGT rather than West Phoenix Water

Company, Inc., as the certificate holder, over a section and ½ of land,
including lands Mr. O'Reilly was discussing.

- 6. The application was filed with the Commission three days later on June 10, 2005.
- 7. I next met with Mr. O'Reilly on August 9, 2005.
- 8. The focus of the August 9, 2005 meeting was a general discussion regarding the provision of water and/or sewer service by WUGT and the nature of its service within its existing certificated area.
- 9. During the August 9, 2005 meeting with Mr. O'Reilly, I briefly discussed the fact that the application involving the transfer of the certificate of convenience and necessity from West Phoenix Water Company, Inc. to WUGT was presently pending before the Arizona Corporation Commission.
- 10. At no time was I informed that Sierra Negra Ranch, LLC was the legal title holder to any land within WUGT's certificated area, or the area inadvertently reflected on the Commission's records as still held by West Phoenix Water Company, Inc.
- 11. I was under the impression that Sierra Negra Ranch, LLC was meeting with WUGT as part of a due diligence investigation.

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12. At no time did Mr. O'Reilly indicate that Sierra Negra Ranch, LLC had any concern with, or intended to participate in the proceedings before the Commission involving the correction of the Commission's records to reflect WUGT as the certificate holder in lieu of West Phoenix Water Company, Inc.

Further affiant sayeth naught.

John Mihlik, Sr.

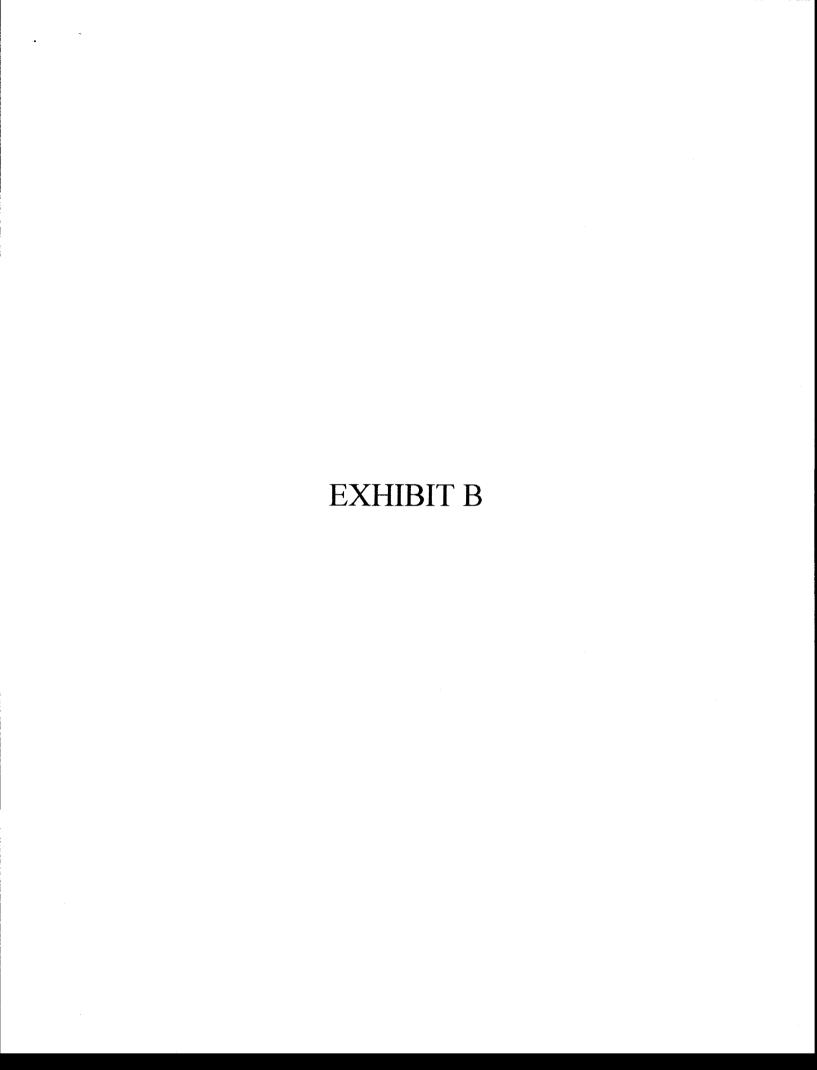
STATE OF ARIZONA ) ss.
County of Maricopa )

The above instrument was executed and acknowledged before me this 7th day of October, 2005, by J. John Mihlik, Sr.



Notary Public

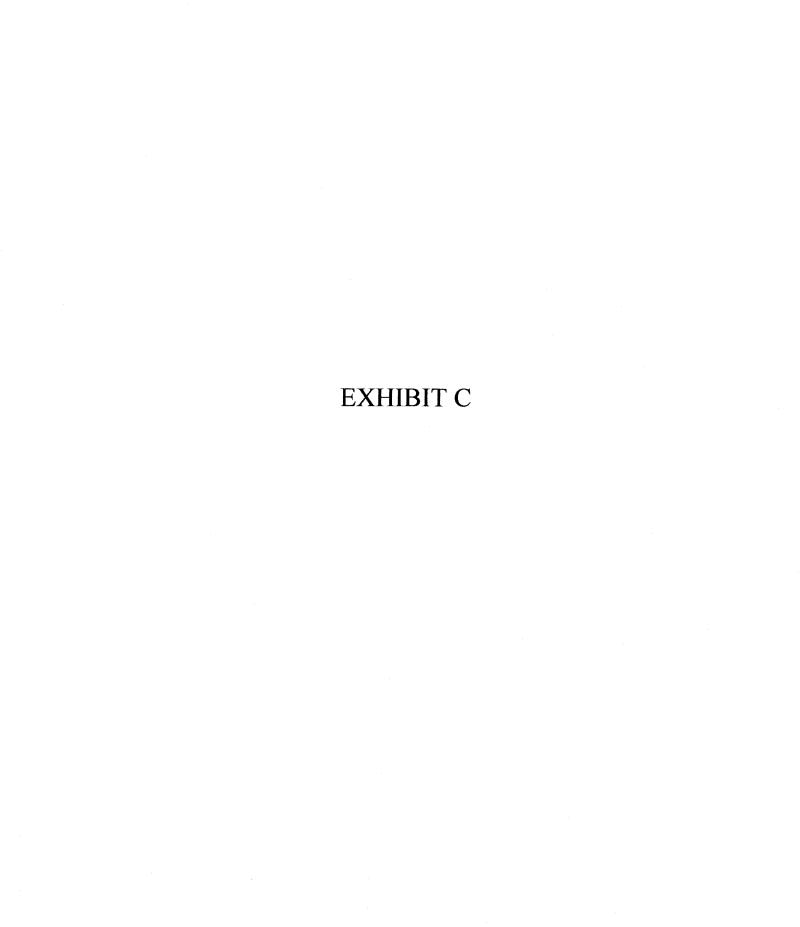
F:\1284\-5-3-2 (West Phoenix CC&N Transfer)\Pleadings\Affidavit of John Mihlik 2.doc



# REFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION

1	BEI OIL THE MICEONIA COMMISSION				
2	COMMISSIONERS				
3	JEFF HATCH-MILLER, CHAIRMAN WILLIAM A. MUNDELL				
4	MARK SPITZER				
5	MIKE GLEASON KRISTIN K. MAYES				
6					
7	IN THE MATTER OF THE DOCKET NO. W-02450A-05-0430				
8	EXTENSION OF ITS CERTIFICATE OF AFFIDAVIT OF J. JOHN MIHLIK. JR				
9					
10					
11	I, John Mihlik, Jr., being first duly sworn upon my oath, do attest to the following:				
12					
13	1. I am the Chief Financial Officer of Water Utility of Greater Tonopah, Inc.				
14	("Company").				
15	2. On August 1, 2005, I was preparing an email response to Staff's email request				
16	for information for any engineering plans for the West half of Section 30 and all of Section				
17					
18	31, Township 2 North, Range 6 West, in Maricopa County, Arizona.				
19	3. At the instruction of John Mihlik, Sr., I phoned Bryan P. O'Reilly on August 1,				
20	2005 to discuss the Staff's request for information.				
21	4. During the phone conversation, I informed Mr. O'Reilly that the Company was				
22					
23	in the process of transferring the CC&N from West Phoenix Water Company to Water				
24	Utility of Greater Tonopah in order to correct the Commission's records and to provide				
25	additional information at Staff's request.				
26					
27					

1	5.	On August 5, 2005, I supervised the mailing of notice to the nine property	
2	owners located in the west half of section 30 and all of section 31 located in T2N, R6W,		
3 4	Maricopa County, Arizona (the "Subject Area").		
5	6.	The Maricopa County Assessor's website was used to identify the names and	
6	addresses of the property owners.		
7	<b>7</b> . 1	Phoenix I-10 LLC was listed as the owner of all of the property in Section 31,	
8	so I caused the notice to be mailed first class prepaid to Phoenix I-10 LLC at the address		
9	listed on the Assessor's website.		
11	8.	The notice has never been returned to WUGT.	
12		Until Sierra Negra Ranch, L.L.C. filed its Motion to Intervene on October 3,	
13	2005, no one at the Company was a aware that it held, or claimed to hold legal title to		
14			
15	Section 51.		
16 17	]	Further affiant sayeth naught.	
18		J. John Mihlik, Jr.	
19	STATE OF A	RIZONA )	
20	County of Mar	ricopa )	
21		The above instrument was executed and acknowledged before me this 12	
22	day of October, 2005, by J. John Mihlik, Jr.		
23		Notary Public	
25	Mw-Commissi	Notary Public on Expires:	
26	OFFICIAL SEAL MARY WALKER NOTARY PUBLIC-ARIZONA MARICOPA COUNTY		
27	My Comm. Expires June 29, 2008 // 128 // September 128 //		



## **Public Notice**

PUBLIC NOTICE OF HEARING
ON THE APPLICATION
OF WATER UTILITY OF
GREATER TONAPAH.
INC. FOR AN EXTENSION
OF ITS CERTIFICATE
OF CONVENIENCE AND
NECESSITY
(W-02450A-05-0430)
On June 10, 2005, Water

(W-02450A-05-0430)
On June 10, 2005, Water
Utility of Greater Tonopah, Inc.,
("Tonopah" or "Applicant") filed
an application with the Arizona
Corporation Commission Corporation Commission ("Commission") for an extension (transfer) of its Certificate of Convenience and Necessity ("CC&N") to provide water utility ("CC&N") to provide water utility service in Maricopa County, Arizona. If the application is granted, the Applicant would be the exclusive provider of water service to the proposed area, and would be required by the Commission to provide service under rates and charges and terms and conditions established by the Commission. The application is available established by the Commission. The application is available for inspection during regular business hours at the offices of the Commission in Phoenix, at 1200 West Washington Street. Phoenix. Arizona, and at the offices of the Company, 2800 N. Central Ave. Ste. 770, Phoenix, AZ 35012.

Central Ave, Sta. 770, Phoenix, AZ 85012.

The Commission will hold a hearing on this matter beginning September 12, 2005 at 10:00 a.m., at the Commission's offices, 1200 West Washington Strect, Phoenix, Arizona. Public comment will be taken on the lirst day of the hearing.

The law provides for an open public hearing at which, under appropriate circumstances, interested parties may intervene. Intervention shall be permitted to any person entitled by law to intervene and having a direct and substantial interest in the matter. Persons desiring to intervene must file a written motion to intervene with the Commission, which motion should be sent to the Applicants or its counsel and to all parties of record, and which, at the minimum, shall contain the following:

1.The name, address, and telephone number of the

1. The name, address, and tolephone number of the proposed Intervenor and of any party upon whom service of documents is to be made it different than the intervenor.

2.A short statement of the proposed intervenor's interest in the proceeding (e.g., a customer of the Applicant, a shareholder of the Applicant, atc.).

3.A statement certifying that a copy of the motion to intervene has been mailed to the Applicant or its counsel and to all parties of record in the case.

record in the case.

record in the case.

The granting of motions to intervene shall be governed by A.A.C. R14-3-105, except that all motions to intervene must be filed on or before August 24th. 2005. The granting of intervention, among other things, artitles aparticles. intervention, among other things, entitles a party to present sworn evidence at hearing and to cross-examine other witnesses. Failure to intervene will not preclude any potential customer from appearing at the hearing and making a statement on such person's own behalf. You will not, however, receive any further notice of the proceeding unless

notice of the proceeding unless requested by you.

The Commission does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to its public meetings. Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation such as a sign language interpreter, as well as request this document in an alternative format, by contacting Linda Hogan, ADA Coordinator, voice phone number 602-542-3931, E-mail 19hogan@azcc.gov. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to

requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.

Published in the West Valley View, and the West Valley Business, on August 12, 2005

# West Business

200 W. Wigwam Blvd., Litchfield Park, Az. 85340-4636 . (623) 535-VIEW [535-8439]

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

State of Arizona
County of Maricopa
I, Elliott Freireich, publisher of West Valley View and West Valley Business, newspapers of general circulation in Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park and Tolleson, Arizona, attest that the legal advertisements for  Water Utility Of Greater Tonopoh, Inc.
W-02450A-05-0430, Public notice
will be has been published on August 12, 2005
Elliott Freireich, Publisher
08-17-05
Date
SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME ON THE
DAY OF Quality (Month), 2005 (YEAR)
NOTARY SIGNATURE: Rene Lean Horman

NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF ARIZONA
Maricopa County
RENE LEEANN HARTMANN
My Appointment Expires 09/30/07